A DISCOURSE

TO THE CLERGY &c.

I Can scarce think it worth the while, or (my good Brethren) that I should now spend much Time in any long general Exhortation to your Diligent and Conscientious Performing the Duties incumbent on you, as you are *the Ministers of GOD, duly called according to the Will of our Lord* Christ, *and the Order of this Excellent Church of* England.

But I find there were here any Obscure Need to use many Words to excite your Care in the several Admonitions of your Holy Calling; yea, I am perswaded I may well spare my own Labour and your

Patience, on this Subject; since all that kind of wholesome Advice has been already so very sufficiently, and so much better given you, in Arguments deduced out of the Holy Scriptures, and most fitly applied to this Purpose, by the Venerable Compilers of our Publick Liturgy, in the Forms appointed for the Ordering of Deacons and Priests.

There, you know, this Work has been so wisely, and so fully, long ago, done to a Bishop's Hands; there all the Parts of your weighty Office are so judiciously laid before you; the high Dignity, and great Importance of it towards the Salvation of Mankind, is so substantially urg'd; the blessed Fruits, and everlasting Rewards of well-attending it, and the extream Dangers of neglecting it, are so justly amplified; the Necessity of adorning your Doctrine by an innocent, virtuous, and pious Life of your own, towards the rendring it efficacious on the Lives of others, is so pathetically inforc'd; that, I am confident, the very best Charge, a Bishop could give to his Clergy, were to recommend seriously to all their Memories, as I now do most affectionately to yours, those very same Questions and Answers, those very same Promises and Vows, as you ought to Esteem them, wherewith every one

of

of you did most solemnly charge his Conscience, at the Time of your Admission into Holy Orders.

I profess, I cannot, nor, I believe, can the Wit of Man, invent any more proper Method of Instruction to Men in your Circumstances, from a Man in mine, than to Exhort you all to a continual Recollection of, and Meditation upon, those many and great Obligations you then seem'd voluntarily and cheerfully to lay on your selves.

Whence there could not but enfue (by GOD's Blessing) a firm Resolution in your Minds to endeavour the Performance of them, and a holy Perseverance in those Endeavours, and in Conclusion, the happy Effects of all on your selves, and the Flocks committed to you: That by thus *Meditating on these Things, and giving your selves wholly to them, your profiting may appear to all; and that by taking Heed to your selves, and your Doctrines, and continuing in them, you may both save your selves, and those that hear you.*

Wherefore seeing that, which else had been a Bishop's proper Business in such Meetings as this, I hope, is or may be so easily shorten'd for me, by you your selves, by your having Recourse to a Rule so well known, and so ob-

vious

vious to you, in a Book, which ought scarce ever to be out of your Hands; I shall the rather, at this Time, purposely omit the prescribing you many Admonitions, touching the *Matter* and *Substance* of the Duties of your Sacred Function. Instead of them, I shall only offer you some few familiar Considerations, which may serve as so many friendly and brotherly Advices, concerning, chiefly, the *Manner* and *Way* of performing some of the Principal Offices of your Ministry.

And, I trust in GOD, that if these Advices shall be as carefully examin'd, and, if you find them useful, as industriously observed by you, as they are honestly intended by me, they may, in some sort, enable you to do laudably, and with Commendation, the same Things, which, I hope, you already do, without just Exception.

Only, in this Place, let me premise once for all, That whatever Instructions I shall now give you, I intend them not only as Directions to you, but especially to my self. As indeed, in all Matters that come under Deliberation, he ought to be esteem'd no good Counsellor, who is very ready and eager in giving, but averse from receiving the same Counsel, as far as it may be also proper for himself.

The

The first Advice I presume to set before your View, shall relate to the *Manner* of doing your Part, in all the ordinary Offices of the Publick Liturgy.

As to that, it is my earnest Request, That you would take very much Care, and use extraordinary Intention of Mind, to perfect your selves in a true, just, sensible, accurate becoming Way of Reading and Administring them as you have Occasion.

A Suggestion, which some, perhaps at first hearing, may think to be but of a slight and ordinary Concernment: Yet, if I am not much deceiv'd, it will be found of exceeding Moment and Consequence in its Practice; and of singular Usefulness towards the raising of Devotion in any Congregation piously inclined: When your weekly, or rather daily Labours of this Kind shall be thus performed; I mean, not with a meer formal or artificial, but with such a grave, unaffected Delivery of the Words, as (if the Defect be not in our selves) will, indeed, naturally flow from a right and serious considering of their Sense.

I pray therefore, take my Mind a-right in this Particular. I do not only mean, that you should be very Punctual in Reading the *Common-Prayer* Book, as the Law requires; that is,

not

not only to do it constantly, and entirely in each Part, without any maiming, adding to, or altering of it, that so *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, may be made, by you, for all Men: For Kings, and for all that are in Authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.*

If you do not so, you are liable to a Legal Punishment and Censure. But my Aim now is, not meerly to prevent that, or to provide only against your Breaking the Law. What I intend, is something higher, and more excellent; something, that you cannot be punish'd for, though you do it not; but, if you shall do it in any reasonable Perfection, it will redound to the unspeakable Benefit of your Congregations.

The Purpose then of this my plain Motion to you is, in short, to beseech you all to employ much serious Pains, in practising the publick and private Reading of all your Offices, as the Use of any of them shall occur, distinctly, gravely, affectionately, fervently; so as every where to give them all that Vigour, Life and Spirit, whereof they are capable: Which certainly is as great as in any human Writings whatsoever; if we be not wanting to them in the Repetition.

The

The Truth is, whatever some may imagine to the contrary, such a compleat and consummate Faculty of Reading the *Common-Prayer*, *Quam nequeo monstrare, & sentio tantum*, is of so great Difficulty, as well as Use, that I am fully convinced, it very well deserves to have some Place among our constant Studies; at least in the first Initiation into our Ministry, if not throughout the whole Course of it.

I could heartily wish, it were altogether needless for me to lay so much Stress on this Advice as I do. Yet, I hope, I may do it without Offence; since it is not with Design of censuring any particular Mens Failings or Deficiencies, but only for the Publick Good; that we may all strive to attain not only to a Mediocrity, but to an Excellency in this Kind: Which, in my small Judgment, can never be done, unless we shall make this Duty a Business by it self, and assign it a special Place among our other Ecclesiastical Studies.

It cannot be denied, but the Church it self has provided for this with all imaginable Circumspection; having solemnly enjoin'd every Clergy-Man, besides the Times of his publick Ministry, to read some very considerable Parts of his Office, once a Day at least, to himself, except he shall be excused by indispensable Business.

By which wise Injunction, though, no doubt, the Church intended primarily to produce and increase, in the Minds of all its Ministers, a Frame of Spirit perpetually serious and devout; Yet, if that be also accompanied with a proportionable Regard to the Manner, as well as to the Matter, of our Publick Prayers, this other Advantage of Well-reading, what is so often to be read, will follow of Course, and by necessary Consequence.

It seems indeed to me, that the very Way of performing all the outward Acts of Religion, has so wonderful an Influence towards obtaining the inward Effects of it, on our Hearts and Consciences, that I cannot but think we can never be too laborious in preparing and exercising our Thoughts, and even our very Voices, in private, for a publick Service of so great Importance.

'Tis true, we generally value and esteem Preaching, as our great Privilege and Honour. And so far we are in the Right. But we are not so, if we look on the Reading of Prayers only as our Task and Burthen; and, as such, shall be willing to get rid of it altogether, or to get through it in any undecent Manner, with such Heaviness or Precipitation, as, in any Affairs of worldly Interest, we would never be content with.

Confider, I pray you, How can we expect that others ſhould revere, or eſteem it according to its true Worth, if we our ſelves will not keep in ſo much in Countenance, as to afford it a fair Reading? If we will not do it ſo much common Juſtice as to contribute, as much as lies in our Power, that it may have an impartial Hearing, equal at leaſt to any other Divine Ordinance? If we ſhall refuſe to lay as much Weight on thoſe Devotions, which our whole Church has commanded us to pour out before the Throne of Grace, for the People, as we do on thoſe Diſcourſes, which we make, on our own Heads, to the People?

Wherefore, I ſay again, this very commendable Skill of devout and decent Reading the Holy Offices of the Church, is ſo far from being a perfunctory or ſuperficial Work, a mean or vulgar Accompliſhment, or a ſubordinate lower Adminiſtration, only fit for a Curate; that it deſerves to be placed among your Miniſterial

ſterial Endow
Preeminence
ceful Inſtru
to raiſe and
ctions: Of the
which, though in our inward Expreſſions
private Supplications towards Heaven,
helpeth our Infirmities, and maketh Interceſſion for
us with Groanings that cannot be uttered; Yet, in
the publick Worſhip, is moſt frequently pleaſed
to operate by ſuch Words, and Sounds as are
expreſs'd with the beſt Utterance.

So that now, with a juſt Aſſurance, I may
aſſert this to be a very proper Qualification of
a Parochial Miniſter; that he has attain'd to
an habitual Faculty of ſetting forth the Publick
Prayers to all their due Advantage, by pro-
nouncing them leaſurably, diſtinctly, warmly, de-
cently; with ſuch an Authority in the Speaker,
as is, in ſome Degree, ſuitable to the Authe-
rity of what is ſpoken.

Thus much I may ſafely ſay, that the Reader
of the Prayers, if he does his Part, in the Man-
ner I have mention'd, by ſuch a vigorous, ef-
fectual, fervent Delivery of the Words and Con-
ceptions, put into his Mouth by the Church it-
ſelf, may give a new enlivening Breath, a new
Soul, as it were, to every Prayer, every Petition

Prayers

[illegible] will appear, what Force, Energy, and Efficacy, and Holy Persuasion there is in Words duly pronounc'd; how much apter they are to kindle in us, and to our Auditors, all Manner of Heavenly Affections, of Spiritual Grief and Contrition, of Love and Gratitude, of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and Joy in the Holy Ghost: When the Harmony of the Tongue shall be tuned, as it were, to the Harmony of the Matter: When the Zeal of the Reader shall keep Company with his Voice; and his Voice shall be adapted to, and varied together with every Sense and Expression: When by long Use, and Imitation of the best Masters, or the best we can come at, we shall know familiarly how to give every Word and Sentence its due Poise; Where to lay a greater or smaller Weight on every Clause, according to its natural or spiritual Force; where to be quicker or more vehement, where slower and more sedate; how to observe equally all Pauses and Distances; how to avoid Monotonies on the one Hand, and immoderate Elevations and Depressions on the other; Yet, where to use the same Tones, where to rise or fall in the right Place: When, I say, the Reader shall be throughly expert and vers'd in practising those, and many more such

natural

natural Decencies of Pronouncing; though they may seem but light and petty Things, taken singly, and a-part, yet all together, in their full united Power, they will be found to have an admirable Concurrence towards the creating, augmenting, well tempering, and well governing of Devotion.

Had I Time, it were easy to exemplify this, in every Office of our Church. Give me Leave only to mention one Instance within the Compass of my own Knowledge, which perhaps may not be unworthy your special Remarking: Though I doubt not but many of you have met with several Examples of the like Nature.

It was immediately after the Happy Restoration of King *Charles* the Second, when together with the Rights of the Crown, and the *English* Liberties, the Church, and the Liturgy, were also newly restored; that a noted Ringleader of Schism in the former Times, was to be buried in one of the Principal Churches of *London*. The Minister of the Parish, being a wise and regular Conformist, and he was afterwards an eminent Bishop in our Church, well knew how averse the Friends and Relations of the Deceased had always been to the *Common Prayer*, Which, by hearing it so often call'd a *low Rudiment, a beggarly Element*, and *Carnal Ordinance*,

they

they were brought to contemn to that Degree, that they shunned all Occasions of being acquainted with it.

Wherefore, in order to the Interment of their Friend, in some sort, to their Satisfaction, yet so as not to betray his own Trust, he used this honest Method to undeceive them. Before the Day appointed for the Funeral, he gives the Pains to learn the whole Office of Burial by Heart. And then, the Time being come, there being a great Concourse of Men of the same Phanatical Principles, when the Company heard all delivered by him without Book, with a free Readiness, and profound Gravity, and unaffected Composure of Voice, Looks, and Gestures, and a very powerful Emphasis in every Part; as indeed his Talent was excellent that Way; they were strangely surprised and affected: Professing, they had never heard a more suitable Exhortation, or a more edifying Exercise, even from the very best and most precious Men of their own Persuasion.

But they were afterwards much more surprised and confounded, when the same Person, who had officiated, assured the principal Men among them, that not one Period of all he had spoken was his own; and convinc'd them by ocular Demonstration, how all was taken Word

for

for Weed one of the very Office ordained for that purpose, in the poor contemptible Book of Common Prayer.

Whence he most reasonably infer'd, how much their ill-grounded Prejudice, and mistaken Zeal had deluded them, that they should admire the same Discourse, when they thought it an unprepared, unpremeditated Rapture: Which they would have abominated, had they known it to be only a set Form prescribed by Authority.

And from the same Observation, we also may as justly infer, that all the Coldness and Dulness, which too many such abused and wanton Spirits, have complain'd they find in set Forms, is not really in the Forms themselves, in ours it is far otherwise. If there be any Colour for the Complaint, that can only proceed from a cold, flat, supine, insipid Manner of Repeating them.

Upon the whole Matter, it is most certain, that, in the publick Worship of GOD, nothing can be more grave, or moving, more holy or divine, either in the confessing, petitioning, or praising Part, than where the Thoughts and Expressions are strictly weigh'd, and prudently reduced into standing unalterable Forms: Provided also, those very Forms be not pronounc'd in a formal Way; but that they be assisted, in-

flamed, inspired, as I may say, with such a present Ardour, and sprightly Zeal in rendering them, as will always make them seem to be *Extempore*, I mean, in the new, ready, vehement Manner of their Pronunciation; but set Forms still, in the solid Ripeness of the Sense, and due Choice, and deliberate ordering of their Phrases and Figures; which are the peculiar Advantages of set Forms: And therefore, so spoken, they will, in all Reason, produce a far more real, unfeigned, and durable Devotion, than all the other meer *Extempore*, rash, and indigested Effusions ought to pretend to.

I should crave your Pardon, that I have dwelt so long on this first Head of Advice; But it appear'd to me so very Material, that I could not hastily pass it over: Especially, since what I have now said on this Subject, may conduce in common all your publick Ministrations, and is equally applicable, not only to the well-performing the daily Morning and Evening Prayers throughout the Year, both of ordinary Days and *Sundays*, and extraordinary Fasts and Festivals; but also to the Offices of Baptism, Matrimony, and the Holy Communion; and indeed to every other Part of our Establish'd Liturgy: In all which, as the Reader officiates better or worse, so most usually is their Benefit

and

and Efficacy, [illegible] of the [illegible]
[illegible] make bold to [illegible] to
[illegible] Third, but also to another Part of
your Office [illegible] which is
that of Preaching.

I am verily perswaded, that the Sermons
preached every Sunday in this one Kingdom,
by the Church of England Clergy in this Age,
are more excellent Compositions of that kind,
than have been delivered, in the same space of
Time, throughout the whole Christian World
besides. Only let me take the Freedom to suggest,
that perhaps it would add much, though not
to the Solid and Substantial Parts of such Discour-
ses, yet to their Popularity, and more ge-
nerally Acceptance, and to the greater Edifica-
tion of our Hearers, if we would universally
addict our selves a little more to this Study of
Pronunciation. By which Advantages alone of
the Freedom, and Life of their Elocution, we
know the Preachers of some other Nations do
seem to reign and triumph in the Pulpit, whilst
their Sermons, as far as we can judge by those
we have of them in Print, are not comparable
to the *English*.

An Observation, which methinks may touze our Preachers to out-do them in this kind of Perfection also: I mean, in a natural, comely, modest, yet undaunted Force of Pronunciation: Not such as is full of over-Actions, and unmanly Gesticulations, which though little Wits may admire for a Time, and to serve a Turn, yet the serious Temper of our Nation will never long approve or admit of. But I intend such a steady, composed, severe, decent, lively, and applicate managing your Voices and Gestures in the Pulpit, as is best accommodated to the Gravity and Solidity of the *English* Genius, and is also agreeable, as much as may be, to the Simplicity, Power, and Height of the Message you bring from Heaven.

The next great Duty then of your Pastoral Office, which comes in our Way, being that of Preaching, I shall begin with one short Admonition, which, I confess, I am almost asham'd to give; and yet it may be very expedient, that it should be given; not, I declare, as a Correction to any of you here present for any Thing past, but only in regard to the future, and for the Sake of those who as yet are less experienc'd Preachers, and young zealous Beginners.

The Caution, in plain Terms, is this, That eve-

ry

ry Person, who undertakes this great Employment, should make it a Matter of Religion and Conscience, to preach nothing but what is the Product of his own Study, and of his own Composing.

I would not be mistaken, as if I should hereby condemn the Reading of the Homilies, which were composed by the Wisdom and Piety of former Times, and have been ever since allowed, nay recommended, by our Church, in some Places, and upon some Necessities to be used. I am so far from doing so, that I rather wish from my Heart we were furnished with a larger Stock of such Learned, Plain and Orthodox Discourses.

There can be no manner of Hurt, nay there is very great Reason, that upon some urgent Occasions, a Preacher should have Liberty to take something out of that publick Treasury, which was laid up for that End, and has the Stamp of Authority upon it to make it current. My Purpose is only to dissuade you from all unjust Rapine of this Kind, from all Underhand Dealing with the private Stores of particular Persons.

As to that, I dare avouch, it is far better and more advisable, even for the rawest Practicer, to exhibit but very mean Things of his own

at first, than to flourish it in the best of other Mens Sense and Oratory. For he, who does never so ordinarily at first, provided it be from himself, may, and will do better and better in time, by GOD's Assistance, through fervent Prayer, and indefatigable Attention to Reading, and Hearing, and practising to Preach. Whereas this sordid Borrowing, this shameful, I had almost said, sacrilegious Purloining from other Mens Labours, is an utter irreconcilable Enemy to all Manner of Growth and Improvement in Divine Learning, or Eloquence.

I will not now insist on the Meanness of Spirit, and perpetual Fear, that must attend the Consciousness of this Guilt, lest it should be, some Time or other, discover'd; or on the Shame and Contempt that often happens to such Pilferers upon the Discovery. But besides all this, in Truth, when once Men have indulg'd themselves in this easy, but despicable and shuffling Commerce, they seldom or never give it over; nay, at last, they can very hardly give it over if they would.

Thence will succeed such a visible Decay of Parts, such a Neglect of all serious Studies, such a Defuetude, and Unaptness for regular Thinking, such Emptiness of Invention and Memory, such a Diffidence of their own Style, Under-

standing

standing and Judgment, that they, who at first made do with others Sermons, perhaps meerly out of Idleness, will at length be forc'd to do it out of Necessity. It will unavoidably happen to this Kind of Thieves, as most commonly it does to all others; they steal so long in their Youth, and Strength of Age, because they will not work, that in their old Age, they are compell'd to steal on, because they cannot work.

But enough, or too much of this. I know to whom I speak; to those, who, for ought I could ever observe, or hear, do not only preach, but themselves compose what they preach. Yet I thought it became me to give this Intimation, seeing in my own small Experience, I have been forced to deny Orders to some Persons, because I found them peccant in this very Crime. I was at first exceedingly amazed to hear them produce most excellent Sermons, whilst I found their Gifts of Nature, and Abilities of Learning, and Knowledge, were far from being passable. But my Wonder was soon over, when I manifestly discover'd, that nothing but their Ignorance was their own, their Sermons belonging of Right to their Betters.

Now then, my Brethren, that we may come into the Way again, after this unwelcome Digression,

greſſion, in making our Sermons, great Regard ought to be had to the Words, and to the Matter; great to both, though not equally great to both.

Your Words and Style ſhould be Simple, Expreſſive, Weighty, Authoritative: And therefore, though not without ſome true Art, yet not very Artificial; and rather void of all Ornament, than over-adorn'd; but as much Scriptural as may be, without Affectation; and as eaſy, familiar, and intelligible as poſſible. And Perſpicuity is always poſſible. Nay, it is almoſt impoſſible, that ones Words ſhould not be perſpicuous, when his Thoughts are clear, and untroubled, and the Thing to be ſpoken of is throughly underſtood. When the Matter is well invented, digeſted, and ordered in the Mind, it very rarely happens, but the fitteſt and moſt expreſſive Words will occur to the Fancy and Tongue of the Speaker. *Verba non invita ſequentur.*

Next, ſince your Matter muſt, of courſe, be either Doctrinal or Practical; where it ſhall be meerly Doctrinal, there it may ſuffice for your common Auditories, and, in good Truth, for all other, from the Loweſt to the very Higheſt, that it be Plain, Sound, Subſtantial, Ancient, Catholick; ſeldom or never curiouſly drawn out

out into the fine Threads of Dispute and Speculation, or, as the Apostle terms them, *Oppositions of Science falsly so called.*

It were indeed much to be wished, that the Agitating of all Manner of Controverſies could be utterly excluded from the great Work of saving Souls, which is your special Work. Yet, because in Times so degenerate from the Primitive Purity, and in this Militant State of the Christian Church, it cannot be expected that you should teach aptly, or oppose Schism and Heresie solidly, without touching sometimes, and entring upon some Walks of Controverſies; Certainly the best Way, in these inevitable Cases, is never to meddle with such obscure Subtilties, out of Spiritual Pride or Ostentation, but meerly out of Necessity, and then only with the most necessary Parts of them; and then also that you be ever sure to keep close to *the Form of sound Words* used in the Church, and to contain your selves within the known Bounds of Scripture Determinations, in every controverted Point, to deliver the Faith to your People, as *it was once delivered to the Saints.*

As little a Lover then as I am of Controversial Divinity in the Pulpit, yet I cannot be faithful to you, or to our Mother the Church of *England*, if I do not recommend Two Sorts of it to

be seriously studied by you: But I must still say, rather to be studied than preach'd; though preach'd too upon reasonable Occasions.

The first Kind, is that of the Controversies between us and the Church of *Rome*. For we are not yet so exempt from Fear on that Quarter, that we should securely lay aside, and suffer to rust on the Walls, those very Arms, which, to the Immortal Praise of the Parochial Clergy, were so successfully managed by them, during the last great *Crisis* of Danger from the Popish Interest.

I the rather mention these, because they are still almost in every Man's Hands; and perhaps a judicious Sum, and full Epitome, collected out of them all, would be as useful a Body of Controversies on those Questions, as any is yet extant.

Wherefore, that you may preserve your own, and the Souls under your Care, from Infection, and be able to convince Gainsayers, I exhort you all, according to your several Stations and Opportunities, to be still conversant and prepared in those very same Arguments against the Papists: Yet, let me say also, not only now in those.

For there is another Sort of Controversies, or rather Blasphemous Doctrines, reviv'd in this

this Age, and which seem, indeed, to be the most cherish'd and darling Tenents of the loose and Antichristian Part of the Age; I mean, those execrable Opinions against the Incarnation and Eternal Godhead of our Saviour, the Satisfaction of his Meritorious Sufferings and Death, and the very Being of the Ever-blessed Trinity: Which being all of them the peculiar and distinguishing Foundations of Christianity, whatever they, who so directly oppose them, may at first pretend, yet they cannot but really tend to the Destruction of the Primitive Faith in Christ, and the Introduction of another Religion, new, and therefore abominable.

Wherefore, to maintain no less than the main Fundamental Points of our *Pure and Undefiled Religion*, you are now more zealously to apply your Thoughts to the serious Study of those Divine Mysteries. Yet, if your please to take my Judgment, after you shall be never so well furnish'd with Weapons Defensive, or Offensive, of this Nature, you should very rarely brandish, or so much as shew them in your ordinary Pulpits; never but when you cannot avoid it without betraying, or deserting the Orthodox Truth. And whenever you shall produce any of them in such Auditories, even then, it were best done in a calm, positive, and didactical,

rather than in a ſharp, wrangling, or contentious Way. But always take along with you, what I ſaid before, to wade no farther in them, in your popular Sermons, than as the Scripture Light primitively expounded ſhall plainly lead you.

This may ſuffice, at preſent, touching the Doctrinal and Speculative Part of your Preaching. As to the other, which is the Practical, in that I need not forewarn you to proceed with ſuch Reſerve, or Reſtraint. In the greateſt Abundance of that, if managed with any tolerable Prudence, there can hardly be any Manner of Exceſs. Moſt aſſuredly the leſs Controverſial, and the more Practical your Pulpit-Diſcourſes are, the better they muſt be, and the more profitable.

Now, my dear Brethren, the Subject of this Part of your Sermons, being, as you cannot but know, ſo comprehenſive and vaſt, as to take in the whole Compaſs of all our Spiritual and Moral Duties; I ſay of Moral alſo; For, let none be deceived, Moral Preaching is of marvellous Uſe wherever it is ſubſervient to the inſpired Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and does not ſtrive to juſtle that, which is its Principal, quite out of the Pulpit: But, I ſay, the Matter of your Practical Preaching being in it ſelf ſo large,

large, as to extend to all the Precepts and Promiſes, both of the Law, and the Goſpel; to all the Temptations and Corruptions of the World the Fleſh, and the Devil; whereof the One, ought to be the eternal Argument of your Exhortations, the Other of your Reproofs and Admonitions: Here it is eſpecially that I would beſeech you all with a Brotherly Tenderneſs, and oblige you with a Fatherly Authority, to lay out the whole Streſs, and Bent of your Souls, to draw all your Studies, all your Learning, Humane or Divine, all your Eloquence, all your Affections, all your Zeal this Way: This being the great Work you have choſen for the Buſineſs of your whole Lives, and for which we all were ſo peculiarly dedicated to the Service of GOD, and his Church: And let me add, this being the great Purpoſe, for which *all Scripture* ſeems to have been *given by Inſpiration of GOD*; That it may be *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction.* There is the chief End of all the Doctrine you are to teach. But what follows? *For Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the Man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furniſhed to every good Work.* There is the great Deſign of all the Practice you are to inforce.

I have

I have dispatch'd what I thought proper now to say on this Head of Preaching, unless you will suffer me to name one very obvious Caution; which yet I cannot think to be ever the less Necessary, for being so very Obvious.

The Caution is, That in all your Sermons, where you have Occasion to praise any Virtue, or dispraise any Vice; in all your Commendations of what is Good, or Discommendations of what is Bad; you would always separate the good Person from the good Thing, and always distinguish the Sinner from the Sin: That is, That you would never put any one Virtue, never any one Vice, you are to deal with in the Pulpit, into the Habit or Countenance of any one Member of your Congregations, so that they may be known thereby: In a Word, that you would utterly shun, and abhor all Personal Flatteries of the Good; and all Personal Reflections on the Wicked.

As to the first of these Extreams, that of Flattery, I need only mention it here. That is seldom thought Worthy of such plain Country Congregations, as yours generally are: 'Twere well, if it were as much excluded out of all other Religious Assemblies of better Quality.

It

It is indeed great Pity, that such glosing and deceitful Language should at last, in any Measure, take Sanctuary in the Church, when it had been so long, in all Ages, by common Consent of wise and good Men, judg'd fit to be banish'd out of all other well-constituted Societies. Has it not been always found by Experience, that a flattering Tongue is so far from increasing the Virtues of the Good and the Great, that it rather serves to deprave the real Worth they might have before? So that, as the Psalmist says, the Men *who flatter with their Tongue, have* not only *no Faithfulness in their Mouth*, but *their very Throat is an open Sepulchre.* But, above all, it is most unbecoming the Pulpit, where Men would seem to speak as from GOD, and with Authority, which nothing can more debase or prostitute than Flattery.

As to the other Excess, that of secret Reflections, and malicious Insinuations against or open Defamations of Persons, I would absolutely dissuade you from the very Shadow, and Suspition of it. I would intreat you all, in *the Bowels of our Lord Christ*, that you would never, on any Occasion, or Accident, not even on the greatest Provocation, do that Affront to the Honour and Modesty of the Pulpit, as to make it a Place for any Rudeness,

or

I have dispatch'd what I thought proper now to say on this Head of Preaching, unless you will suffer me to name one very obvious Caution; which yet I cannot think to be ever the less Necessary, for being so very Obvious.

The Caution is, That in all your Sermons, where you have Occasion to praise any Virtue, or dispraise any Vice; in all your Commendations of what is Good, or Discommendations of what is Bad; you would always separate the good Person from the good Thing, and always distinguish the Sinner from the Sin: That is, That you would never put any one Virtue, never any one Vice, you are to deal with in the Pulpit, into the Habit or Countenance of any one Member of your Congregations, so that they may be known thereby: In a Word, that you would utterly shun, and abhor all Personal Flatteries of the Good; and all Personal Reflections on the Wicked.

As to the first of these Extreams, that of Flattery, I need only mention it here. That is seldom thought Worthy of such plain Country Congregations, as yours generally are: 'Twere well, if it were as much excluded out of all other Religious Assemblies of better Quality.

It

It is indeed great Pity, that such glosing and deceitful Language should at last, in any Measure, take Sanctuary in the Church, when it had been so long, in all Ages, by common Consent of wise and good Men, judg'd fit to be banish'd out of all other well-constituted Societies. Has it not been always found, by Experience, that a flattering Tongue is so far from increasing the Virtues of the Good, and the Great, that it rather serves to deprave the real Worth they might have before? So that, as the Psalmist says, the Men *who flatter with their Tongue, have* not only *no Faithfulness in their Mouth*, but *their very Throat is an open Sepulchre.* But, above all, it is most unbecoming the Pulpit, where Men would seem to speak as from GOD, and with Authority, which nothing can more debase or prostitute than Flattery.

As to the other Excess, that of secret Reflections, and malicious Insinuations against or open Defamations of Persons, I would absolutely dissuade you from the very Shadow, and Suspition of it: I would intreat you all, in *the Bowels of our Lord Christ*, that you would never, on any Occasion, or Accident, not even on the greatest Provocation, do that Affront to the Honour and Modesty of the Pulpit, as to make it a Place for any Rudeness,

or

or Scurrility whatsoever. Surely nothing can be more disgraceful to the Reputation of your Profession, or more destructive to Edification, or more unbeseeming the Gravity and Charity of a *Church of England* Divine, than to make an Ordinance so Sacred, and the Word of GOD handled in it, become instrumental to your own private Passions, Animosities, or Revenges.

I am now arrived at the next great Duty of your Holy Office, which is, that of Catechising; not so much to recommend to you the Duty it self; though I might do that most earnestly and vehemently, and with some kind of Episcopal Expostulation and Reprehension, if any where it should be totally neglected. But that, I would not here so much as suppose.

I cannot doubt but we are all of one Mind, touching the inexpressible Advantages of this Ordinance in general; we especially who have lived in these Times. We cannot but be abundantly convinced of it by a woful and dear-bought Experience: Since it is evident, that the far greater Part of the monstrous Looseness of Opinions, and profane Enormity of Manners, which overwhelm'd the whole Face of the last Age, and has too much descended on this, did remarkably proceed from the notorious Defect, or universal Omission of Ortho-

dox

dor Catechising during the Calamities and Confusions of the late Rebellion.

[illegible] touching the immanent Neceſſity [illegible] of Reforming, or I may well hope rather, amongſt you, of Continuing this firſt Part of Chriſtian Diſcipline, I make ſure Account we are [illegible]

The only Thing to be debated, is the Manner, how this Holy Exerciſe may be ſo put in Uſe, that the bleſſed Ends, which, I am aſſured, we all aim at alike, may be attained.

Without all Controverſy then, the firſt Practice of your regular Catechiſing in all your Churches, ought to be in the very ſame Order, and on the ſame Materials, which the Church-Catechiſm has traced out, and the Law has injoin'd.

I would therefore deſire you all to begin, or rather incourage you to go on plainly and literally in that Way, with a ſtrict Confinement of your Catechumens, as they may be called, to that very compendious Introduction; to have your Youth throughly verſed and inſtructed perfectly in all the Queſtions and Anſwers there preſcribed. This ought by no Means to be left undone in the ſmalleſt, or pooreſt of your Country Cures; where the higheſt Capacities are not at firſt above, and the loweſt can

scarce be below, this kind of plain Information.

But in greater Towns, where the Youth are somewhat better Educated, and so should be more capable of Improvement, there, supposing still you never omit the other more simple Way, you may, by [illegible] with Number, and discreet Pace, proceed further; I will not say, by inlarging the Foundations, but by raising the Building higher on the same Compass of Ground.

And this I have known done with very remarkable Fruit, and Benefit to the Learners, in a familiar Method, whereof I will only trace out to you the imperfect Draught, which, by Time and Custom, you may easily advance, and complete. The Method is this; That to every Article, and every Clause of it, in the Church-Catechism, after they have learnt them by Heart, you should annex, at first, some such Texts of Scripture, as may suffice to prove the Matter contain'd in them, and do it in the fewest Words, and cleerest to the Purpose. These Texts you should induce your young Disciples to repeat often, and perfectly without Book, together with each Article, and should begin to let them understand, by a very brief Exposition, how evidently each Scripture proves each Article.

Then

Then, by degrees, after they shall be made intimately acquainted with that first Set of Texts, you may more leisurely add other Quotations out of the Bible somewhat larger, but still tending to the same Purpose; and when you have explained them in the like Manner, but more copiously, you may cause those also to be learnt as exactly, and repeated as readily as the former. And the same Course you may begin, and go through with again, still adding more Texts, and more distinctly dividing the Parts and Members of the several Articles, as often as you shall find it practicable, or convenient.

Thus, whilst you do not over-burden tender Minds, but forbear infilling those Instructions into them, Drop after Drop, the Children, you have undertaken in this Way, of very little out of the common Reach, and many also of riper Years, who shall be present, and attentive, will, beyond their own, and even your first Expectation, come to have treasured up, almost unawares, in their Minds a little Body, as it were, of Orthodox Divinity; which cannot but be all Orthodox, all Primitive, as being, without Mixture purely collected out of the Holy Scriptures.

With the Scriptures, by this Means, their Memories will unperceivably be filled, yet not

ſo as only to fit them to cant with unſeaſonably, in common Diſcourſe: but ſo as to inſtruct or confirm their Judgments, and teach them to apply properly, what they ſhall there read to every Part of a ſober Chriſtian's Belief, or Practical Duty.

In this great Article of Catechiſing, I would offer one honeſt Direction more. It is, That you ſhould not ſo much aim in it at the Length of the Exerciſe, or at the perpetual Changing of your Thoughts and Expreſſions, as at the ſound Bottom, on which you build your Diſcourſe, and the ſolid, unmoveable Ground of each Doctrine, whereon you fix your Explanations; though your Performance each Time be the ſhorter, ſo it be not unreaſonably ſhort, and though your Words, and Phraſes, may happen frequently to be the ſame, and repeated more than once.

In truth, I would, if I durſt, offer ſome ſuch Advice alſo as to your Preaching. But I know, the common Vogue is againſt my real Opinion in this Matter. And therefore, I muſt handle this Point the more tenderly.

It is indeed a very great Burden, that the Humour of the People, and our own too, in ſome Meaſure, has laid on our Profeſſion. Such as, I think, no other Calling, or Way of Life,

were

were ever willing to lay on themselves, no, not any other Nation that I know of, has exacted in so high a Degree, from their Clergy, that you should write or once a Week at least, always present your Auditories with new Sermons, and those also to be composed with the Care and Accuracy, almost of Elaborate, and Complete Treatises.

Whereas I am sure, in the Business of Catechising, and most probably, the same will be found true in Preaching also, that a sound substantial, well-collected, and well-woven Provision, of Plain, Instructive, Godly, and Devout Discourses, altered, and increased, according to the Teachers growing Abilities, and used over and over, though in the same Desks, or Pulpits, would be more Edifying, and sink deeper into the Minds, and Consciences of the Hearers, than all the greatest Affluence, and Redundance of new Words and Phrases multiply'd, or interchanged, which the most fanciful, copious Catechist, or Preacher, can devise.

I have known some very learned and pious Men, and excellent Preachers, and zealous Lovers of our Church, and Country; whose Welfare and Prosperity they wisely judg'd to be inseparably join'd; I say, I have known these Persons affectionately declare their Wishes, that some

ſome ſuch Order, as this I ſhall ſuppoſe, were obſerved by the greateſt Part, if not by all our Parochial Miniſters.

That, on the very entring into their Miniſtry, or at any Time afterwards, if they have not done it before, they would ſet themſelves to draw out the general Lineaments, and larger Members of a whole Years, or perhaps a Two-Years Courſe of Catechiſms, and Sermons; following therein the Annual Method of our Churches Devotions, or any other Scheme they ſhall approve, and form to themſelves; provided it comprizes all the main Points of Chriſtian Doctrine, and Practice.

That on this Stock they ſhould ſet up; and in the firſt and ſecond Year, begin to fill up the void Spaces, and lay the firſt Colours, towards the Finiſhing, as well as their Sufficiency will then allow; ſtill collecting, and conveying all the Streams of their uſeful Reading and Learning into thoſe common Receptacles and Channels; and ſo ſucceſſively preaching them on, as the Year turns round.

That ever after, in the whole Progreſs of their Miniſtry, they ſhould ſtill be adding to, or cutting off from, or poliſhing thoſe firſt imperfect *Ideas*; altering the Method, and Shape of the whole, if needful; inforcing, or increaſing

the

the Arguments, Illustrations, and Amplifications, if Wanting; inserting new Doctrines before unobserved, making new Practical Inferences before untouched, as their Judgments, or Light, or Experience shall improve; but especially still drawing more and more, over all, a new beautiful Skin, and the lovely Features of Scripture-Language: And then, without Scruple, or Disguise, should preach them again and again, so corrected, augmented, and in some Part renewed.

And I have heard these very wise Persons, some of them most excellent Fathers of our Church, often conclude, That by this, or some such Method, any Preacher, though of no extraordinary bright Endowments at first, yet of an honest Mind, clear Sense, unwearied Industry, and judicious Learning, would, in Process of Time, in all likelihood, have by him in Store, a complete, domestick, Course of sound, well-compacted, affecting Sermons; that, by GOD's Blessing, might with the just Advantages of Delivery, be of far greater Use to his Conscientious Hearers, than all that pompous Novelty, and counterfeit Variety, which some others may boast of.

I say, counterfeit Variety. For so indeed it is often, upon Trial, found to be. And now I have

have faithfully told you the Opinion of those Great Men, I will presume, under so fair a Shelter, to disclose my own Thoughts in this Business; yet still with all Deference and Candour towards any, who may differ from me in this Particular.

We have lived in an Age, when the two Gifts, as they are wont to be call'd, of *Extempore* Praying, and *Extempore* Preaching, have been more pretended to, and magnified, than, I believe, they ever were before, or, I hope, ever will be again, in this Church and Nation. Yet, for all I could ever learn, or observe, the most sudden Readiness, and most profuse Exuberancy, in either of these Ways, has been only *Extempore* in Shew and Appearance, and very frequently but a cunningly-dissembled Change of the very same Matter and Words often repeated, though not in the same Order.

As to that of *Extempore* Praying, which therefore too many mistake for Praying by the Spirit; it is manifest, that the most exercised, and most redundant Faculty, in that Kind, is, in Reality, only Praying by the Fancy, or the Memory, not by the Spirit. They do but vary, and remove the Scripture-Style and Language, or their own, into as many Places, and Shapes, and Figures, as they can. And though they have

acquired

acquired never so plentiful a Stock of them, yet still the same Phrases, and Expressions, do so often come about again, that the Disguise may quickly be seen through, by any attentive and intelligent Hearer. So that, in plain Terms, they who think themselves most skilful in this Art, do really, all the while, only pray in set Forms disorderly set, and never ranged into a certain Method. For which Cause, though they may not seem to be set Forms to their deluded Auditors, yet they are so in themselves; and the very Persons who use them most variously, and most artificially, cannot but know them to be so.

This, my Brethren, seems to be all the great Mystery of the so much boasted Power of *Extempore* Praying. And why may not the like be affirm'd, in great Measure, of *Extempore* Preaching, which has so near an Affinity with the other? Is not this also, at the Bottom, only a more crafty Management of the same Phrases and Observations, the same Doctrines, and Applications, which they had before provided, and composed, and reserved in their Memories?

Do but hear the most voluble Masters in this Way, once or twice, or perhaps oftner, as far as their Changes shall reach, and at first, no

doubt, you will be inclined to wonder at the ſtrange Agility of their Imaginations, and Compaſs of their Inventions, and Nimbleneſs of their Utterance. But if you ſhall attend them calmly, and conſtantly, the Vizour will be quickly pull'd off, though they manage it never ſo dexterouſly: You will at laſt find, they only walk forward, and backward, and round about: One, it may be, in a larger Labyrinth than another; but in a Labyrinth ſtill; through the ſame Turnings and Windings again and again, and, for the moſt Part, guided by the ſame Clue.

The Explanations, perhaps, of their Texts, the Connexions, and Tranſitions of the Parts, and ſome ſudden Gloſſes, and Deſcants, and Flights of Fancy, may ſeem new to you. But the material Points of Doctrine, and the common Places, to which, upon any Loſs or Neceſſity, they have Recourſe, theſe they frequently repeat, and apply to ſeveral Subjects, with very little Alterations in the Subſtance, oftentimes not in the Words. Theſe are the conſtant Paths, which they ſcruple not to walk over and over again, 'till, if you follow them very cloſe, you may perceive, amidſt all their *Extempore* Pretenſions, they often tread in the ſame Rounds, 'till they have trodden them bare enough.

But,

But, GOD be thanked, the Church of *England* neither requires, nor ſtands in Need of any ſuch Raptural (if I may ſo call it) or Enthuſiaſtical Spirit of Preaching. Here the more adviſed, and modeſt, the more deliberate and prepared the Preacher is, the better he is furniſhed, by GOD's Grace, to deliver effectually our Churches ſolid Senſe, its fixed Precepts, its unalterable Doctrines. Our Church pretends not to enter into Mens Judgments, meerly by the Affections; much leſs by the Paſſions to overthrow their Judgments. The Door, which that ſtrives firſt to open, is of the Underſtanding, and Conſcience: It is content, if by them a Paſſage ſhall be made into the Affections.

I have detain'd you the longer on this Argument, becauſe I am perfectly convinc'd, that although one or two Preachers in an Age, or perhaps ſome few more, Men of extraordinary Parts, Aſſurance of Mind, and Volubility of Tongue, may, by long Uſe, make a remarkable Blaze, for a Time, in this ſudden, unſtudied Way: Yet, if it ſhould ever become the general Cuſtom of the whole *Engliſh* Clergy, it would produce little more than Ignorance and Confidence in many of our Preachers, and tempt many of the Laity, who preſume themſelves to be equally gifted, to think they had an equal Right to the Miniſtry.

But what need I say any more of this Matter? It is confess'd on all Hands, that if an *Extempore* Kind of Preaching had been universally put in Use among us, from the beginning of our Reformation, the whole Church of Christ had been much impoverished thereby, had been deprived of the best Treasury of Sermons that ever it was inrich'd with, since the Apostles, and their Successors, and the Primitive Fathers Times.

There is still behind one solemn Duty more, belonging to all of us, wherein I would willingly suggest one serious Word of Counsel. And it concerns the *Office of Visiting the Sick*. I would not doubt, but herein you generally do your Parts, diligently, piously, and prudently. But there are some Things in this, as well as in the others before-mentioned, touching the *Manner* of Doing it, whereof the Observation may be of a peculiar and signal Benefit to your selves, as well as to your Spiritual Patients.

If you please to consult the Rubricks relating to this Office, you will find, you are more left to your own Liberty in this, than, I think, in any of the rest. For this Duty of Friendship, and Charity, being supposed to be more in private, the Rule it self in the Liturgy seems to

give

give Way to, nay to direct, some Occasional Admonitions, and Exhortations, to which I do not remember it does equally impower you in any of the rest, out of the Pulpit.

Wherefore, to prepare your Thoughts, and to replenish your Minds throughly for this Work, not only of Ministerial Duty, but of Compassion, and Brotherly Love, you shall not only do well to furnish your Memories with a plentiful Store of pious, moving, affectionate Expressions, out of the Book of Psalms, and other Practical, and Devotional Parts of the Holy Scriptures, first; and, next to them, out of our own Liturgy; and all these to be casually used, as shall be most proper: But principally I would perswade you, to have some good, sound Body of Casuistical Divinity, of your own studying I mean, to be always at Hand, that is, in your Hearts, as well as Heads.

You can scarce imagine, unless you have try'd it, as I hope, some of you have, of what unspeakable Use this Divine Science of Cases of Conscience will be to you upon any sudden, unforeseen Emergency in such Ghostly Visits.

Indeed, the being a found and well-experienced Casuist, is also a most excellent Qualification towards all the other Ends of your Mini-

Ministerial Office; there being no kind of Skill or Proficiency in all your Theological Studies, that more becomes a Divine of the Church of *England*; whose highest Spiritual Art is to speak directly from his own Conscience to the Consciences of those under his Pastoral Care: And this at all Times; but most especially when they are on their Sick-Beds: When Mens Consciences are usually most awakened, most manageable, most truly tender, and capable of the best Impressions.

So that I say it again, and can never say it too often; one of the most Necessary Provisions, and Instruments of your Sacred Armory, which you are always to carry about with you, in your own Souls, (for there it is best lodged; thence it will be drawn forth, on all Occasions, with the quickest Expedition,) is such a firm Sense, and general Scheme of the Primitive, Uncorrupt, Practical, Casuistical Divinity: Such as, on the one Side, is purged from the Spiritual Crafts, and Equivocations of the Jesuits; and, on the other, is freed from the Narrowness and Sourness of Enthusiasm.

I told you even now, it highly concern'd you all to be well stock'd with Plenty of good Matter, for present Use, in the Visitation of the Sick; and that for your own Sakes as much

as

as theirs. And, in truth, so it is. A Clergy-Man can, no Way better, have his own Affections and Passions regulated, tempered, soften'd, mortified, sanctified, than by frequently performing this Office in a right Godly Manner.

By thus often seeing Death before our Eyes, in all its ghastly Shapes, we cannot, if it be not the Fault of our own Insensibility, but be the better accustomed, and made skilful to teach the Whole and the Healthful, how to prepare to meet that *King of Terrors*. By these Spiritual Anatomies of the Dying, (if I may be allowed to use so bold a Metaphor,) we cannot but be made more expert in discerning the inward Frames and Constitutions of the Living, and to apply the propereſt Remedies to the Diseases of their Souls.

And, to instance now only in one Duty of such a faithful Spiritual Physician, that of Relieving and Refreshing the Conscience throughly searched and purged, and of Comforting and Restoring the true Penitent, What, I beseech you, can be a more God-like Work among Men, than for us to be humbly serviceable in that, which GOD owns to be *His* Work, to be skill'd in *not breaking the bruised Reed, and not quenching the smoaking Flax*? To be instrumental

tal in performing our Lord's own Office, under the Parable of the good *Samaritan, in binding up the wounded Spirit, and pouring Wine and Oil into it?*

What can more adorn your Evangelical Ministry, than a soft, melting, compassionate, fellow-feeling, merciful Habit, and Disposition of Mind, and, as the Scripture styles it, *the Ornament of a meek Spirit?* Or, Where can such a blessed Temper be more seasonably practised, or sooner learn'd and increas'd, than in the Chambers of Sick and Dying Persons?

Now, my dear Brethren, having all along insisted, that, for the furnishing and inriching your Minds with Spiritual Knowledge, towards the due performing these, and all other Offices of your Holy Profession, you should make the Holy Scriptures the principal Subject, and indeed the only final Center of all your Studies; that your Doctrine should never swerve from that unerring Rule; your very Words, Language, and Style, should every where taste of, and overflow with those living, and inexhaustible Streams of Truth, and Godliness; it may be expected, that, for the Sake only of the younger Divines among you, I should add a Word or two, touching the *Manner* and Method of your Studying these sacred

sacred Writings. It is indeed a Business too large to be drawn within the narrow Compass of the Conclusion of such a Discourse. But since a little, at least a competent Understanding of this Blessed Book, ought to be the Beginning and End of all our Spiritual Studies; and because I may speak to some, whose Circumstances in this World are not so plentiful, as to enable them to purchase large Libraries; yet their Industry is by no Means to be discouraged, nor their Zeal, in pursuing this Holy Skill, abated; I will open to you my own simple Apprehensions in this Matter, with Submission still to better Judgments.

My Opinion is, That although, without Question, all Manner of Secular, or Ecclesiastical Learning, can never be more usefully employ'd, than in this Search, and is all little enough for it, and too little to compleat it; yet, when all is done, the Scripture it self is the best Expositor, the best Commentator on it self.

It is apparent, that the whole *New Testament* is so to the whole *Old Testament*; that being the real Light of the others figurative Darkness, and Mysteries; the very Consummation of the others Prophecies, and *Shadows of good Things to come.* But I will also aver, that eve-

ry Part, every Book, every Sentence almost, both of the *Old* and the *New Testament*, well-compared, and judiciously set one over against the other, in their right View, and Reflection, cannot but prove, by GOD's Blessing, an inestimable Explanation of each other: If a due and accurate Care, I say, be taken to interpret their difficult Texts, by others of their own, that are easier; and to collate their Words, Phrases, and Sense, that may seem dark or doubtful in some Places, with the same or the like in other Places, where they are clearer, and more intelligible.

I cannot forbear, as I go along, to declare my Meaning a little fuller in this Matter, by one special Instance. For consider, I pray, how is it possible for any the most learned or sagacious Student in Divinity, to conceive the true, and genuine Sense of the Eloquent and Divine Epistle to the *Hebrews*, except he has been also throughly conversant in the Writings of *Moses?* Or, where can there be found a clearer, a more Spiritual, and more Illustrious Commentary on the whole Ritual Part of the *Pentateuch*, than the Epistle to the *Hebrews?*

The like also may be proved of all other Portions of the Holy Book of GOD. And indeed, to manifest what mutual Brightness, and

and Splendor, the Scripture gives to and takes from it self, by comparing its several Parts, I need only urge the frequent Practice of our Saviour himself, and the inspired Penmen of the Gospel, in thus Expounding the Old Law by the New, and the New by the Old.

So that now I may with greater Freedom propound my humble Conceptions in this Matter: That where Multitudes of Fathers, Councils, Schoolmen, Histories are wanting, (which are all very beneficial Helps, where they can be had,) but, where they cannot be come at, if a Clergy-Man shall resort immediately to the Fountain it self first, and always imploring the Assistance of that Divine Spirit, by which the Scriptures were written, and then, with a sincere Love of the Truth, and Resolution to live according to it, without which, GOD will neither hear our Prayers, nor bless our Endeavours; and also with an humble Heart, a devout Mind, and unquenchable Fervour of Spirit, and a right unbyass'd Judgment; join'd with a sufficient Skill in the Original Languages, and in those other Introductory Studies; which no Man in Holy Orders, if it be not the Bishop's Fault as well as his own, can possibly be altogether to seek in: And if withal he shall be assisted with some of the Ancient, and some few

of the Modern, sound and Orthodox Commentaries; he will, in all human Probability, by an incessant, daily, and nightly meditating upon, and revolving in his Mind, the Divine Text it self, become, in Time, though not perhaps as *Apollos* is said to have been, *Eloquent, and Mighty in the Scriptures*, yet *a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.*

The more to incourage your Studies in this Method, if you shall be necessitated to it, give me Leave to present you with one Example of a great Divine, and Bishop, in the Time of King *Charles* the First, who was one of the most Eminent Confessors then, and survived those Calamities, to die in Peace and Tranquility, several Years after the Return of King *Charles* the Second.

In the common Persecution, which then happened to the whole Episcopal Order, this Reverend Person was exposed to a more than ordinary Degree of popular Malice, and Rage; so that, without ever being once brought to his Trial, he was closely imprisoned in the *Tower* for almost Twenty Years, and was not only dispoil'd of his Annual Revenue, and Personal Estate in the first Fury of the Civil Wars; but was also plunder'd of most of the Collections

of

of his former Labours, and a very considerable Library.

Wherefore, being thus laid up in Prison, without any Prospect of Liberty, having also a numerous Family to maintain, so that he was not able, in any sort, to repair the Loss of his Books and Papers, he betook himself to this Course of Study: Well knowing, that he could have no faithfuller Companion for his Solitude, nor surer Consolation in his Afflictions, than the Holy Scriptures, he applied himself to them immediately, with little other Help, but what he had within himself, and the best Prints of the Originals in the Learned Tongues, and their Translations in the Learned, and Modern, in both which he was a great Master.

Thus, however, he firmly and vigorously proceeded so far in the single Study of the Scriptures, that long before his Enlargement, he had composed a great Mass of Annotations on divers Parts of the Bible. What is become of them, I know not. If they are either imbezell'd, or suppress'd, no doubt, it is to the great Damage of the Church; since the Native Thoughts of a Great Man are generally, at least, as good as the most Artificial.

Perhaps you will say, he might be able to do all this by the Strength of his Memory,

and the Variety of Learning he had laid up in it beforehand: And I make no Doubt but those were an exceeding great Assistance to him.

But what was very Remarkable, and for which I am bold to produce him as an Instance worthy your Imitation in this Particular, I know, he was often heard to profess solemnly, That in all his former Studies, and various Reading, and Observations, he had never met with a more useful Guide, or a surer Interpreter, to direct his Paths in the dark Places of *the lively Oracles*, to give Information to his Understanding in the obscure Passages, or Satisfaction to his Conscience in the experimental Truths of them, than when he was thus driven by Necessity to the assiduous Contemplation of the Scripture alone, and to weigh it by it self, as it were, in the Ballance of the Sanctuary.

Had I not been already so tedious, there is one Particular behind, on which I ought most justly to have expatiated, which now I can only name; and it is that touching the *Manner* of your Conversation; that it be such, as may render you *Vessels* not only *sanctified*, but *meet for your Master's Use*, and, as St. *Paul* also adds, *Vessels of Honour*.

I would

I would therefore recommend, to Men of your Character, not only the Innocency, and Sincerity, but (as much as humane Frailties will allow) the Comelineſs, and the Amableneſs of every Word, and Action of your Lives: That you eſpecially would not only ſtrive *to follow whatſoever Things are true, or honeſt, or juſt, but* moreover, *whatſoever Things are pure, and lovely, and of good Report*; that you would *think on theſe Things, not only if there be any Virtue, but if there be any Praiſe of Virtue.*

From you, my Brethren, it may well be expected, that your Behaviour ſhould not only be unblameable, but, if I may be permitted ſo to ſay, ſomething more than ſtrictly unblameable, and that not only to thoſe within, but alſo towards them who as yet are without; that you ſhould not only keep your Minds clean, your Hands unpolluted, your Tongues well-govern'd, your whole Courſe of Life ſpotleſs, and upright, and your Conſciences undefiled, but alſo *your Conſciences void of Offence*, and that *towards Men*, as well as *towards GOD*: That you may be not only exemplary in your Families, in your Pariſhes, in the Neighbouring Country, in the whole Church of GOD, to the Gentry, to the Laity, to your Brethren of the Clergy, to the Commonalty of our Communion, for your

Juſtice,

Justice, Modesty, Sobriety, Prudence, Quietness and Obedience to Superiors, [illegible] would exercise, and create all the Virtues, and also your Humility, Love, [illegible] Will, good Wishes, Condescension, and Charitableness, even beyond the Character of [illegible] very Enemies of it. That towards all [illegible] would sweeten the Gravity of your Deportment, and soften the Strictness of your Conversation with the Gentleness, and Suavity of your Manners: That you would take special Care never to be obstinately in the Wrong, though you are sure you are in the Right, even never to be too rigidly, austerely set [illegible] in the Right: That by all reasonable Means, mild and winning Converse, and [illegible] a ready Return, but by a chearful Performance of all Christian good Offices; and even by making your very Oppositions, and Contentions with those that differ from you, if you shall happen to be forced to any, as humane, and friendly, and easy to be intreated as possible: by all this, you may do your Part *to silence the Ignorance of foolish and unreasonable Men.* Who knows but you may convert, and gain some of them? Who knows but by your thus *following* not only *Righteousness and Faith*, but *Peace and Charity*; by your being not

not *only apt to teach, but gentle to all Men, and patient, in Meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*; who knows, if by theſe Means *GOD peradventure will give* the fierceſt Adverſaries of our Church *Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth?* Moſt certainly by theſe Means, or by no other, in all human Probability.

I cannot now enlarge, as I would, on this moſt Neceſſary and Seaſonable Argument. But unqueſtionably by thus keeping your ſelves free from haughty Cenſoriouſneſs, and untractable Peeviſhneſs, and ſullen Darkneſs of Life, and Manners: And by excelling in the contrary Virtues, you will, in the beſt Way, teach and convince all that diſſent from you, how unworthy ſuch a Phariſaical Garb and Diſpoſition is of the true Chriſtian Liberty, or Severity.

In ſhort, by ſuch a grave, ſedate, decent, charitable Courſe, and Colour of your whole Lives, you will do your ſelves, and eſpecially the Church of *England*, moſt Right. For our Church it ſelf, wherever ſhe is ſet in a true Light, cannot but be found to be moſt of this ſweet, meek, and truly pacifick Temper, of any Church in the Chriſtian World.

I conclude therefore, whoever among her Sons, and Members, much more among her

Teachers, and Fathers, as you and we are, ſhall not do their utmoſt, to attain to this gentle, obliging, charming Manner of Converſation, which our Church preſcribes towards all Men, Adverſaries as well as Friends, I muſt repeat what our Bleſſed Saviour ſaid to his Diſciples, on the like Occaſion, *They know not what Spirit they are of.*

There is One or Two ſhort Requeſts more I am to make you, which chiefly reſpect me, as your unworthy Biſhop; and then I ſhall give Eaſe to your Patience.

One is to intreat, that you would be exceeding watchful, and indeed religiouſly ſcrupulous, for whom you give Certificates and Teſtimonials. For what ſome of you, perhaps out of good Nature, or good Neighbourhood, or an Eaſineſs, and not being able to reſiſt Importunity, may at firſt think to be only a Matter of Form, is not ſo to me. I have ſcarce any other Way poſſible of being rightly informed, from without, of the good Lives, or ſufficient Endowments of the Perſons, but only by yours, and the like Teſtimonies. The Law of the Land appoints that Method to me, and almoſt confines me to it. Whereas if you make this to be only a Buſineſs of private Favour, or Partiality, not of publick Judgment, and Conſci-

ence,

ence, I may chance to be led into very miſchievous, and ſometimes irreparable Miſtakes; only by that, which you may eſteem but as a Piece of Baſhfulneſs, and good Breeding: I may be induced to lay Hands on the Ignorant, and Unworthy, meerly by the Authority of your Names, the ſubſcribing of which you might think to be only an Office of common Humanity and Modeſty.

My next and laſt Requeſt to you, at this Time, ſhall concern your Curates. This it may ſuffice only to intimate to you. I know, I need not ſpend many Words on it in this Aſſembly; becauſe there is but a very ſmall inconſiderable Number of Pluraliſts in my Dioceſe. I am perſuaded, they will be found upon Inquiry the feweſt of any in *England*.

I cannot but ſay, I could be very well content there were more: Eſpecially if all, ſo qualified, would be rigorouſly true to the Church, in their Choice of Subſtitutes, where they can not always reſide themſelves.

For, as I will frankly own, I never yet heard an invincible Objection, againſt the prudent Allowance, and moderate Uſe of Pluralities; but only ſome plauſible popular Ones againſt the Abuſe of them; which we are as much offended

with, as any others can be: So, I verily believe, were this Legal Indulgence to the Clergy so carefully observed every where, as, among divers other good Ends of it, to furnish us with a Race of painful, learned, godly Curates; who, by this Way of Probation, may make, and shew themselves worthy to be promoted to a higher Charge; there Pluralities would be so far from being a Scandal, or Prejudice, that they would conduce to the Strength, and Defence, as well as they do to the Ease, and Ornament, of the Church of *England*.

The great Obligation then I am to lay upon you; you, I mean, whom it does at present concern; is this, That you would be very Unmovably faithful to me, to your selves, and to the whole Church of GOD, in the Persons, whom, on just Occasions, you shall offer to me to be your Curates.

I do not only intend, that you should never Own or Patronize any as your Curates, who really are not so, that under that Colour, by false Titles, they may slip into Holy Orders: But I speak of such Instances where you really have need of, and the Law allows you to have Curates. In such Cases, it is my earnest Intreaty, that you would not only keep all the Legal Times of your own Residence, and Hospitality;

and not only afford your Curates a liberal Maintenance in your Absence; Liberal, I mean, not only for their own Livelihood, but for their continuing some kind of Hospitality too, to the Poor at least: But that you, you especially, who are of greater Age and Experience, would watch over your Curates as your Fellow-Labourers, your Friends, your Probationers, for whose Improvement in Divine Learning, Godly Conversation, and Abilities of Teaching, you, or I, must be answerable to the Great Shepherd of our Souls.

But it is high Time to dismiss you. I beseech Almighty GOD to assist, and prosper all your Labours, to his Glory, and your own Comfort in the Great Day of Account. Towards the obtaining which Blessed Ends, you can never think of any better, or indeed of any other Means, than by living up, in your private Conversation, to the Religion you profess, and teach others; and, in your publick Office, by defending and supporting the Church established by Law in this Kingdom.

A Religion, and a Church, that well deserves all this at your Hands; being in its Faith most Primitive; in its Orders most Apostolical; in its Discipline most Moderate; in its Charity most Diffusive in its Devotions most Spiritual as to the

the Subſtance, moſt Decent as to the Circumſtances. In few Words, in its Intereſts it is inviolably united with the Laws and Rights, with the Well-being, I had almoſt ſaid with the Being, of the *Engliſh* Nation and Government: In its Principles, it is irreconcilable with the Intereſts of Popery, and the only impregnable Defence againſt its Return into this Land: Which it is much to be lamented, that the Diſſenters will not ſee, and are therefore Diſſenters, ſince it is Evident, the Papiſts themſelves have always ſeen it, but too well.

What then remains? But that as Chriſtians, as *Engliſh*-Men, as Church-Men, we ſhould all make it our principal, our only great Concern, and pray to *GOD the Father of Mercies*, that all others of our Character, throughout the Nation, would make it theirs, to repreſent to the World the true Excellencies of ſuch a Religion, and ſuch a Church, by our Doctrine and Example, with Induſtry and Vigilance, with Stedfaſtneſs and Courage, *in Meekneſs of Wiſdom, and with Zeal according to Knowledge.*

And if we ſhall all, in this Manner, devote our ſelves to this Work, we may then be aſſured, that the ſame Promiſe, which our Lord Chriſt,

Chriſt, in ſome of his laſt Words on Earth, made to his whole Church, will be eminently made good to this, the pureſt Part of it in theſe latter Ages of Chriſtianity, that *He* himſelf *will be alway with it even to the End of the World.* Amen.

FINIS.

eternal, in Tone of his last Words on Earth, made to his whole Church, will be eminently made good to this, the purest Part of it in these latter Ages of Christianity, that He himself will be always with it even to the End of the World. Amen.

FINIS.